

# The Native Americans

Native Americans sharing the **Algonquian** languages settled in Maryland centuries before Europeans colonized the area. They lived near water they called Chesapeake, meaning the “great shellfish bay.” Dome-shaped houses were grouped in small villages. They had relied on agriculture as a main source of food since about 1000 C.E. Women planted crops such as maize (corn), beans, and squash. The Algonquian also grew tobacco. They smoked it during religious gatherings. They also used it as medicine.



## Hunting and Fishing

The Algonquian hunted deer and other game in nearby forests. Animals provided meat for food. They also provided furs and skins for clothes and bones for tools. The Algonquian also netted and speared seafood such as oysters and turtles. They made dugout canoes by scraping out the core of burned trees. The canoes could be as long as 20 feet (6.1 meters). They were up to 4 feet (1.2 m) wide.

**Algonquian fished for bluegill, rockfish, northern pike, and other fish in the area's waters.**





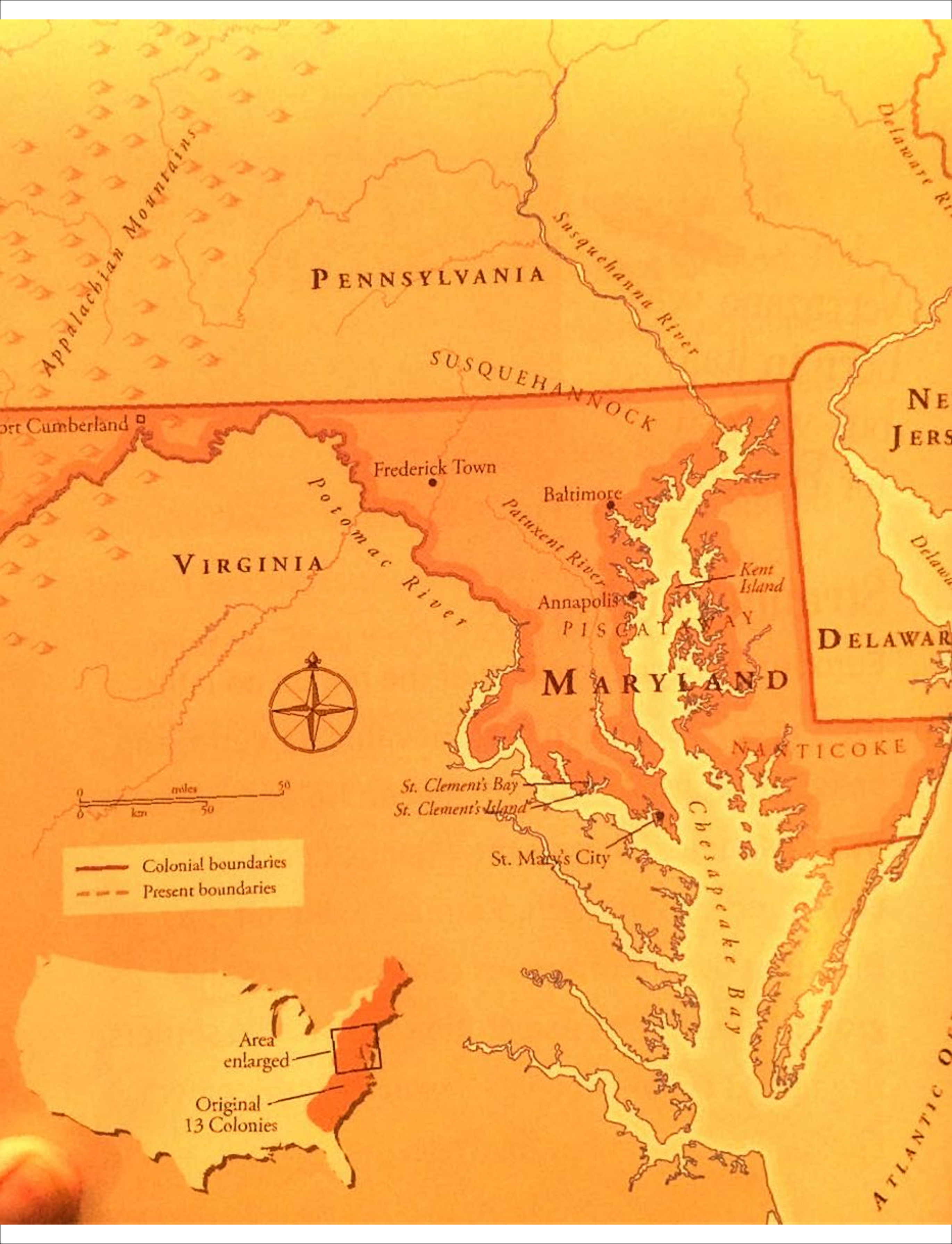
Verrazano was  
born in Italy  
but worked  
for France.



## Strangers Offshore

Europeans became aware of the region no later than 1524. Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazano sailed to North America that year. He passed by Chesapeake Bay on the Atlantic Coast but continued to sail north. Verrazano did not stay. But soon other Europeans came. Some native groups offered the use of their land to the settlers. Organized trade developed with the newcomers. Europeans continued to arrive.





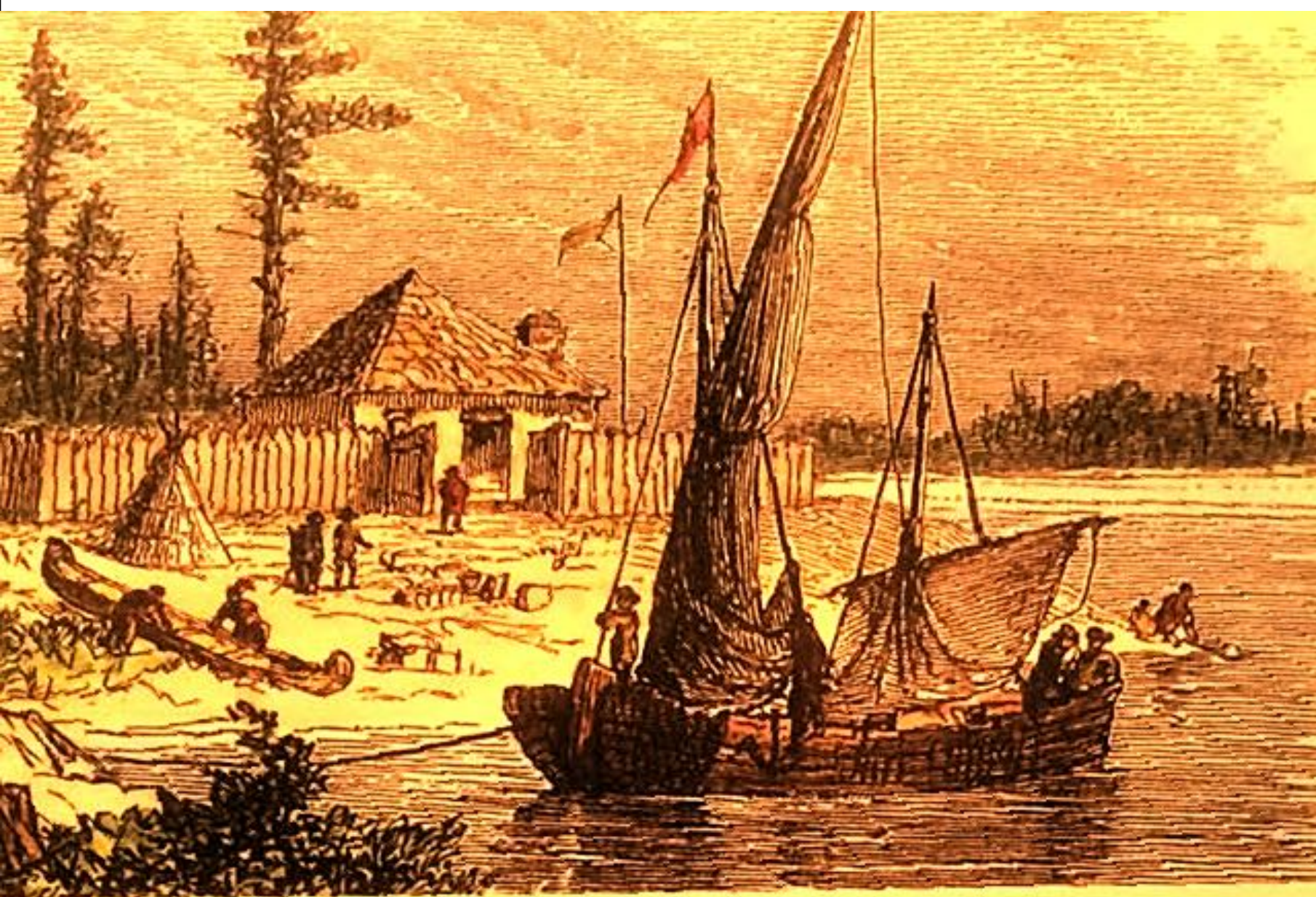


# Lord Baltimore's Colony

European countries claimed North American land throughout the 1500s. Businessmen and settlers saw the new region as an opportunity to make money. Beaver fur was particularly valuable.

Europeans founded colonies to trade with Native Americans who trapped beaver. The fur was made into hats and other fine clothing for rich Europeans. Settlers gave the Indians items such as guns, metal pots, and axes in return for the fur.





The success of the fur trade kept the Kent Island trading post busy.

## The Fur Trade

Englishman William Claiborne built a trading post on Kent Island in Chesapeake Bay in 1631. Claiborne already had a successful fur-trading business in the a nearby English colony of Virginia. About 100 colonists quickly settled on Kent Island. English businessmen soon wanted to establish more businesses in the region. George Calvert was also known as Lord Baltimore. He asked England's King Charles I for a **charter** to set up a colony named Maryland.



# The Maryland Colony

Calvert died before the charter took effect. His son Cecilius was the second Lord Baltimore. Cecilius continued his father's work. Cecilius's brother Leonard bought land from the Yaocomaco Indians in 1634 for a settlement called St. Mary's City. The colonists planted maize and other Indian crops with the natives' help. The settlers also began planting tobacco. They hoped to turn it into a profitable **cash crop**.

**Historic St. Mary's City can still be visited today.**



St. Mary's City served as Maryland's capital until 1695.



## Troubled Beginnings

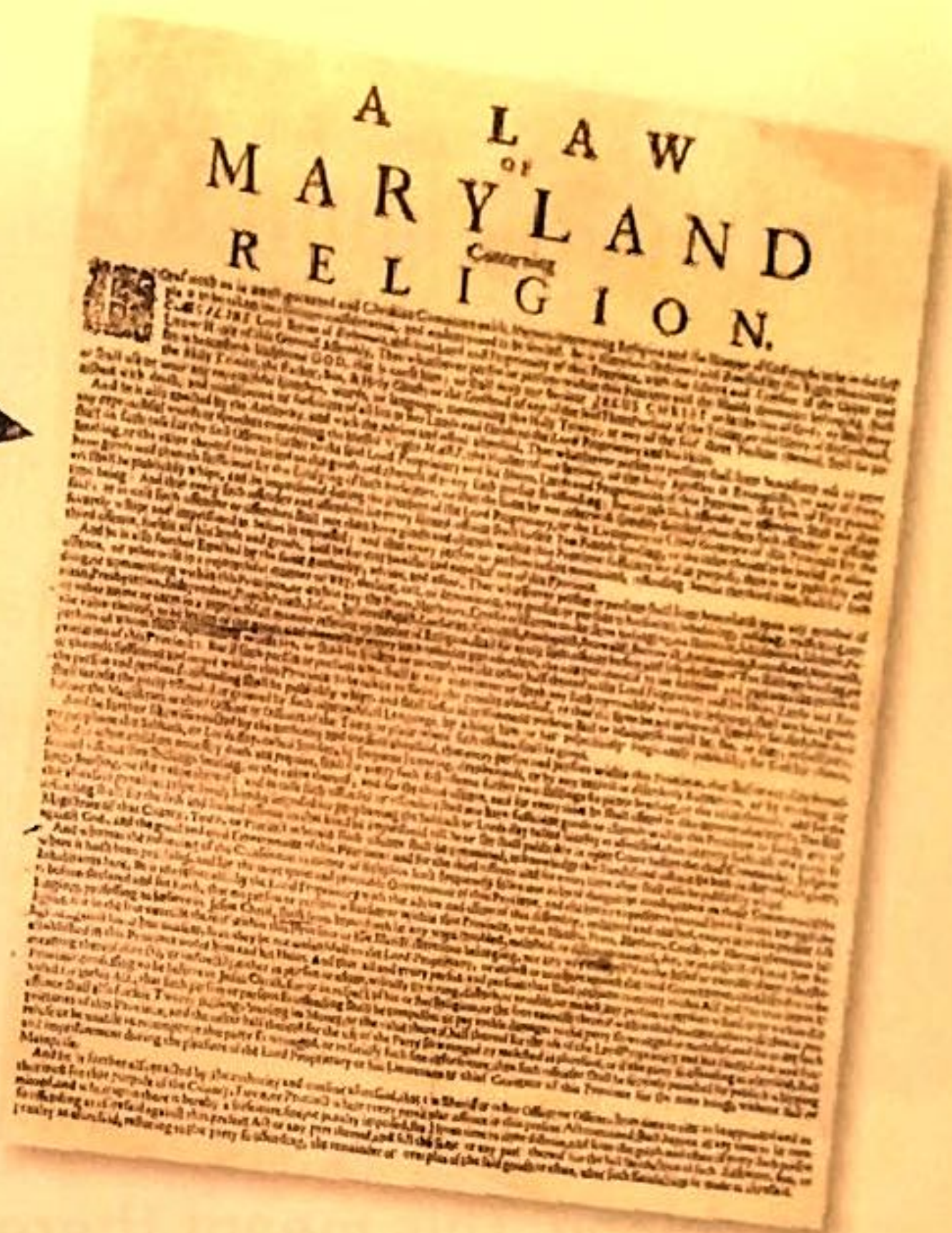
Neighboring Virginia disliked the new Maryland Colony. Calvert's charter had allowed him to take Kent Island from Claiborne, a Virginian. The two colonies also competed for furs. Calvert was Catholic. But Virginians were Protestants, or non-Catholic Christians. The two groups disliked one another. But the Calverts brought Catholic and Protestant settlers to Maryland. They hoped the two faiths could live in peace with one another and with Native Americans.

**St. Ignatius Catholic Church was founded in 1641 by one of the first Maryland settlers.**





Maryland's law  
guaranteeing  
religious freedom  
became known as  
the Toleration Act.



Claiborne attacked St. Mary's City in 1635.

The colonies battled two more times in the 1640s.

Cecilius Calvert appointed a Protestant governor to lead Maryland. He hoped this would bring peace.

The colony's **legislature** passed a law that allowed all Maryland Christians to worship as they pleased.

The system worked until Protestant Marylanders successfully seized power in the colony in 1688.

They soon outlawed Catholicism.



## Tobacco Plantations

Tobacco became a valuable cash crop. Most people grew it on small plots of land. But some wealthy growers established large farms called plantations. One of the growers' problems was finding enough people to work in the fields. Maryland's small population was not growing quickly. Few children were being born there. Few women had settled in the colony. This meant there were few mothers. Men outnumbered women about three to one.



Tobacco is still grown in the St. Mary's area today.








**An overseer watches as two slaves work on a Maryland plantation.**

Tobacco growers paid **indentured servants** to come to Maryland to work the plantations. Indentured servants worked several years to repay a planter for paying their way to America. But fewer people chose to be indentured servants after 1670. Plantation owners began bringing in slaves from the Caribbean and Virginia. Maryland's slave population numbered about 8,000 by 1715. This was about one-third of the colony's total population.



# Life in Maryland

Maryland farmers lived a hard life. Men, women, and children rose before dawn to do their chores. They often worked until the evening hours. Tobacco quickly drained the soil of nutrients. Farmers were often forced to move to new fields. Maryland's wet summers allowed disease-carrying mosquitoes to breed beyond control. Disease killed so many settlers in the colony's early days that most did not live past age 40.



By the 1700s, colonial families were larger, with more children to help with chores.



## Expensive Land, Cheap Land

Wooden houses eventually replaced the one-room log cabins of the early settlement period. The wealthy built large houses. But most Marylanders were not rich. Many rented their farms from plantation owners because they could not afford to buy land. Low tobacco prices forced farmers to turn to growing crops such as maize by the 1680s. Cheap land soon lured people to an area of Maryland's frontier called the Piedmont.



A log cabin was built from the trees cut down when farmland was cleared.







Colonial women prepared wool and spun it into yarn. They then wove the yarn into cloth.

## Women on the Farm

Maryland began to attract female **immigrants** as the 1600s continued. Most married farmers. Their children grew up and married. This added to Maryland's population. Women raised the families. They cooked and cleaned the house. They also kept gardens and mended clothes. Women began making and selling a variety of homemade products as the population increased. These included yarn spun from wool and butter churned from milk.



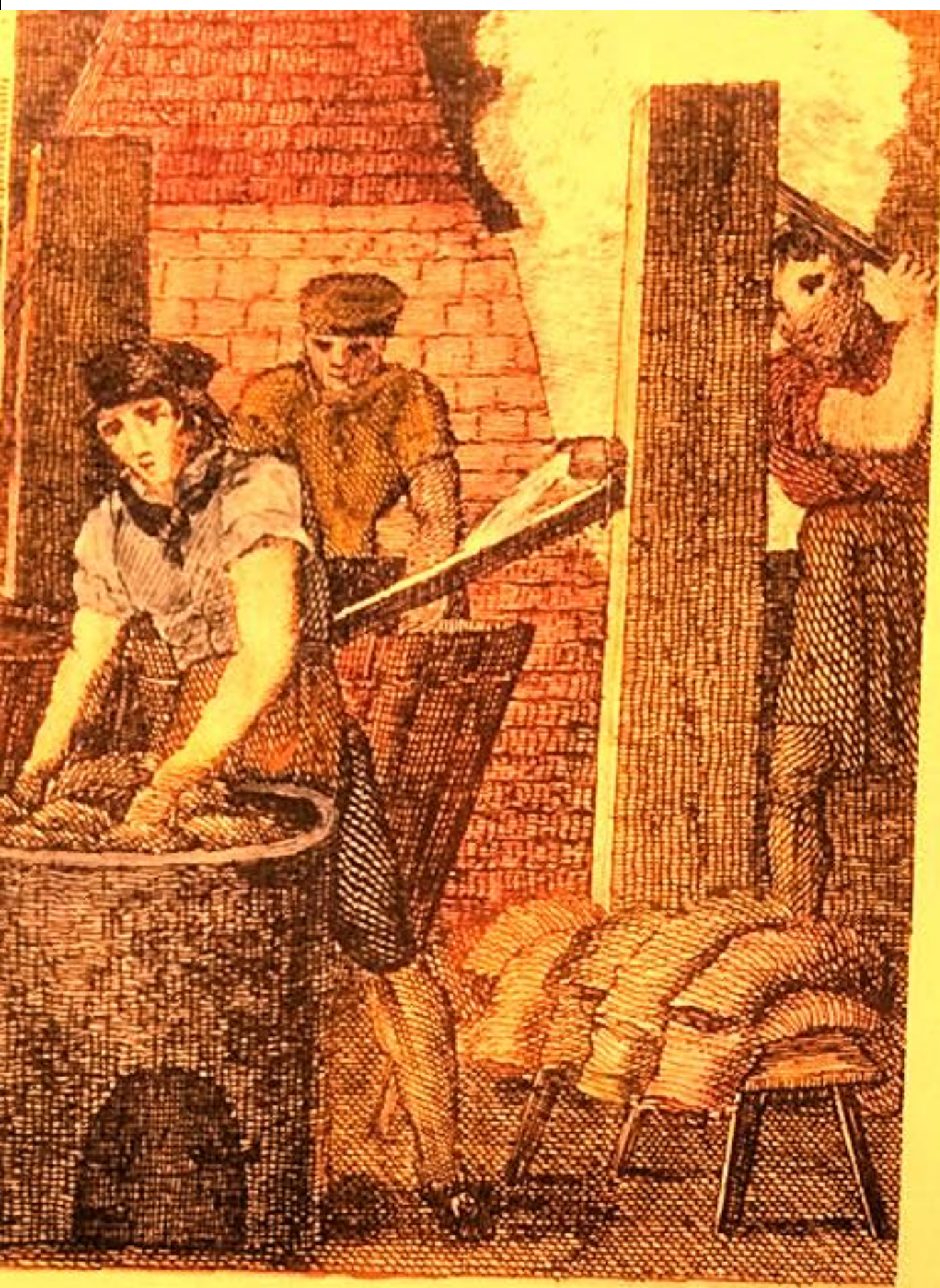


**Large tobacco plantations required many people to work on them.**

## Men on the Farm

Men cleared the land and plowed the soil. They also planted and harvested. A typical farmer used wooden tools and plows that were sometimes edged with iron. Metal tools later became more common. Men and children tended pigs, cattle, and chickens. But many Maryland men were becoming tradesmen by the late 1600s.





**A colonial dyer added color to clothing.**

← An apprentice might learn reading and writing as part of his apprenticeship.

## The Tradesmen

Tradesmen built wheels and barrels. They shod horses, tanned leather, and made tools. Some boys spent a number of years as an **apprentice** to a tradesman. Apprentices learned the skills to get jobs of their own. Maryland had few towns. Tradesmen often found jobs on plantations. Other people **started** new types of businesses. Ironwork in factories **became** important after 1715.



# Colony Childhood

Doing their chores was one of the most important tasks of Maryland children. So was getting an education. Maryland did not build public schoolhouses. Families were scattered throughout the area. It would have been difficult to get enough students to fill a schoolroom. Most children received basic lessons in reading and writing at home. Rich families often sent their children to small private schools or to schools in England.

**Adult family members were sometimes the only teachers colonial children had.**

